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**Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team**

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**Resources for Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans**



Our country is grateful for your service. As one American family, we all join together to welcome you back home from your service.

VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York is committed to supporting our returning troops from Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to make sure they have the health care and benefits they need.

It is very important to note that you have five years from your date of discharge to receive free health care for any condition that may be related to combat service. After the five years, a co-payment status will depend on whether your illness or injury is found to be service-connected.

To enroll in VA health care:

- Visit your nearest [VA Medical Center or Community Based Clinic](#) nearest you
- Fill out the 10-10EZ [online enrollment form](#)
- or by mail or fax the completed 10-10EZ form to the nearest [Medical Center or Clinic](#).
- For Eligibility or Enrollment Questions Call Toll-Free: 1-888-823-9656

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**Program Managers for Returning OEF/OIF Veterans**

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Each medical center and benefits office has an OEF/OIF Program Manager to work with service members and veterans from Operations Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## Resources for OEF/OIF Veterans (continued)

### Albany Program Manager

Jennifer N. Audette, LMSW

**Phone:**

(518) 626-5335

**Address:**

Jennifer N. Audette  
VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York  
113 Holland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208



### Bath Program Manager

Dawn R. Smith, LCSW

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Dawn Smith  
Bath VA Medical Center  
76 Veterans Avenue, Bath, NY 14810



### Interim Canandaigua Program Manager

Tobi Keefe

**Phone:**

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Canandaigua VA Medical Center  
400 Fort Hill Avenue, Canandaigua, NY 14424



### Syracuse Program Manager

Lauren Love-Dubeau, LCSW-R

**Phone:**

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Lauren Love  
Syracuse VA Medical Center  
800 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY 13210



### VA Western New York Program Manager

Katherine Smythe, LCSW-R

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(716) 862-3111

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Katherine Smythe  
VA Medical Center  
3495 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215



## Resources for OEF/OIF Veterans (continued)

### VISN 2 Point of Contact

Fran Peters  
Network Health Benefits Executive, Veterans Service Center

**Phone:**  
(518) 626-7339

**Address:**  
Fran Peters  
VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York  
113 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208



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## Transition Patient Advocates for Returning OEF/OIF Veterans

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The VA also has Transition Patient Advocates who assist returning OEF/OIF Veterans as they are transitioning from military healthcare to the VA healthcare system.



### Transition Patient Advocate

Michael Calloway, MS  
**Coverage:** Albany, Bath, Canandaigua  
**Phone:** (315) 425-4400 Ext 52816  
**Cell Phone:** (315) 350-1989  
**Toll Free:** 1-800-792-4334 Ext 52816  
**Address:** Michael Calloway  
VA Medical Center  
800 Irving Avenue  
Syracuse, NY 13210



### Transition Patient Advocate

Melissa J. Krul, LMSW  
**Coverage:** Fort Drum, Syracuse, Western New York  
**Phone:** (716) 862-7453  
**Cell Phone:** (315) 412-1395

## Resources for OEF/OIF Veterans (**continued**)

**Address:** Melissa J. Krul  
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3495 Bailey Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215

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### **Transitioning from the Military to VA Health Care**

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#### **Transitioning to VA Health Care**

It is our duty and privilege to provide veterans with the best available care. VA has set up a special program designed to meet the specific needs of veterans returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Many of our veterans have suffered illness and injury related to the Global War on Terrorism. It is our goal to make sure these veterans receive the highest quality of care in a timely manner. VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York will continue to look at the needs of OEF/OIF veterans and provide services to meet those needs. We encourage you to let us know how we can improve our service to you, the deserving veteran.

#### **Available Health Care Services:**

Outpatient medical/primary care

- Hospital and community living center care
- Dental
- Pharmacy and prescriptions
- Mental health care (counseling, addiction therapy, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) treatment, etc.)
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Readjustment counseling
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- Prosthetic services
- Specialized health care for women veterans
- Outreach programs for homeless veterans
- Medical evaluation for military service exposure, including: Gulf War, Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, and certain other environmental hazards

For additional information about health care services that are available to you, go to the [Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom \(OEF/OIF\) Web site](#).

## Resources for OEF/OIF Veterans (continued)

### Eligibility

The primary factor in determining basic eligibility for VA benefits is “veteran status.”

- Active duty in the Armed Forces with a discharge or release from active service under conditions other than dishonorable conditions establishes veteran status
- Reservist or National Guard members can establish eligibility for VA health care benefits only if federally activated
- Reservists who are never called to active duty may qualify for some benefits through the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
- Veterans who served on active duty in combat support or direct combat operations during a period of war after the Gulf War, or against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998.

*Veterans under this authority may be enrolled as priority category 6 and are eligible for the full medical benefits package; as such they are not subject to co-payments for care potentially related to their combat service for a period of 5 years from the date of discharge from active duty, recorded on the DD214.*

### Online Enrollment

To receive health care benefits all veterans must enroll. You may enroll online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Click on the “Apply Online,” then go to “Health Eligibility.” This will bring you to the electronic application for health care benefits (Form 10-10EZ). You can also get enrollment information and assistance at any [Veterans Service Center](#) at any [VA Medical Center or clinic](#).

### Homecoming after Deployment

With deployment comes change. Knowing what to expect and how to deal with changes can make homecoming more enjoyable and less stressful.

### Expectations:

- You may miss the excitement of the deployment for a while
- Spouses may have become more independent and learned new coping skills
- You may not want to talk about it when others keep asking
- You may wonder if you still fit into the family

### Tips:

- Support good things your family has done
- Take time to listen and talk with loved ones
- Be patient with yourself and family members
- Be aware that your family may not be the same as before; everyone may have changed

## Resources for OEF/OIF Veterans (continued)

### Patient Transition Advocate Program

The transition from Military Service to civilian life can be challenging. VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York has Patient Transition Advocates to support you through this process and serve as your advocate. If you are an Operation Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom veteran and have concerns about eligibility, health care or other benefits, our Patient Transition Advocates are available to assist you.

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Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 24 hours a day to help in an of operation, 62,000 veterans, veterans have called the been 1,400 rescues to prevent



staffed by trained professionals immediate crisis. After one year family members, and friends of Lifeline. Of those there have possible tragedies.

The Center for Integrated Healthcare gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the VISN 2 and Department of Veterans Affairs websites for portions of the content used to prepare this informational brochure.